

REMARKS

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, has been obviated by revising the language of these claims so that they now more clearly and concisely define what the inventors consider to be their invention.

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over the Leng '283 patent has been obviated by revising independent claims 1, 5 and 6 to more clearly distinguish the invention from the prior art of record. Specifically, amended claim 1 now recites that each of the switch assemblies comprises

“a body portion having a top side whose end portions are covered by switch buttons that extend to an inner periphery of said opening portions.”

Support for this limitation is present in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8.

By contrast, the push button switch 9 of the Leng '283 patent has a rim for spacing the switch push buttons away from the steering wheel hub, as is specifically set forth in column 5, lines 41-46:

“the rim of the long sides 13 and of the end sides 12 of the housing 11 is relieved above the push buttons 10. The rim serves as a spacer between the steering wheel aperture 56 and the push buttons 10, to prevent the push buttons 10 from being affected by the steering wheel hub 5.”

For this reason alone, amended claim 1 is clearly patentable over the Leng '283 patent.

Claim 2 is patentable not only by reason of its dependency on claim 1, but for its recitation that each of the switch assemblies includes “a mounting member extending from said body portion in a radial direction towards said pad cover.” This claim is supported by, in particular, Figures 4 and 5, and encompasses member 72 which is best seen in Figure 4 as connected between spokes 20. As there is no equivalent structure disclosed or suggested in the Leng '283 patent, claim 2 is likewise clearly patentable.

Claim 3 has been withdrawn, and accordingly, no discussion of this claim is deemed necessary.

Claim 4 is patentable not only by reason of its dependency upon claim 2, but for

its further limitation that the mounting member "has end portions adapted to be attached to spokes of said steering wheel."

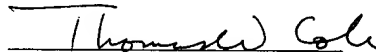
Figure 5 includes substantially the same limitations as amended claim 1, and is therefore patentable for the same reasons given with respect to claim 1.

Claim 6 has likewise been revised to include the new limitations of claim 1, and is therefore patentable for substantially the same reasons given with respect to claim 1.

Finally, new claims 7 and 8 are patentable not only by reason of their dependency upon claim 1, but for their specific limitations directed toward the shape of the body of the switch assemblies (based upon Figure 5) and upon the mounting member utilized in the second embodiment of the invention which attaches the switch assemblies to a pad side floating horn metal member.

Now that all the claims are believed to be allowable, the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is hereby earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas W. Cole
Registration No. 28,290

NIXON PEABODY LLP
Suite 900
401 9th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004-2128
Telephone: (202) 585-8000
Fax: (202) 585-8080